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**HABITS OF THE BITTERN.**—I notice some statements respecting the breeding habits of the Bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*) in the lately published work of Mr. Samuels, on the Ornithology and Oölogy of New England, which are entirely at variance with my experience. He says that these birds build in bushes or low trees or tufts of grass; that the nest is of twigs, grass, and a few leaves; and that they breed in communities, a dozen or more nests being often found in the space of a few rods.

The few eggs that I have found have all been on the ground—the bare ground—among thick tufts of lambkill, on the “Fowl Meadows,” which skirt the upper part of the river Neponset; nor have I been able to find more than one nest on ten acres, though I have searched most carefully. I make these remarks because I think no part of the bird’s history ought to go unnoticed; and because I am convinced that he, who should expect to find a community of stick-built bittern’s nests on bushes or trees in this vicinity, would be disappointed.

*South Canton, Mass.*

W. E. ENDICOTT.

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#### GEOLOGY.

**THE MIOCENE TERTIARY FLORA OF NORTH GREENLAND.**—Different voyagers have, from time to time, brought from Greenland, and lodged in various museums in Britain and Ireland, rich collections of fossil plants, all of which have been submitted to Professor O. Heer, a Swiss Naturalist. They were all found 1,080 feet above the sea, on a steep hill, at Atanekerdruk, opposite the Isle of Disco, in lat. 70° N. A total of sixty-six species have been recognized, and from them and their associated facts, the author infers that they must have grown where they were found; that they belong to a Miocene flora rich in species, at least some of which extended to still higher latitudes; that in the Miocene epoch the climate of North Greenland was warmer than it is at present by fully 16° C., or 28° 8° F.; and he thinks that “we could not by any rearrangement of land and water produce for the northern hemisphere a climate which would explain the phenomena in a satisfactory manner.” “We must admit,” he adds, “that we are face to face with a problem whose solution in all probability must be attempted, and we doubt not completed by the astronomer.”—*Quarterly Journal of Science, London.*

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#### MICROSCOPY.

**PHOSPHORESCENT ENTOMOSTRACA.**—Minute Crustaceans, belonging to this order and allied to the genus Cypridina, were discovered in

the Pacific Ocean by Prof. J. D. Dana, while in the United States Exploring Expedition. Others have been described and figured by Major Owen, in the *Microscopical Journal* for 1866:—

When these were taken, the sea was alive with them. When swallowed by, or entangled with other creatures, they in their turn appear to be also luminous. They also give luminosity to the water itself as it flows over them. When they are at rest, they gradually cease to give out light; but as soon as they are disturbed or in motion, or the vessel containing them is shaken, they again become bright, even after many hours' confinement. . . . I have seen the ship's deck running with liquid fire when the net containing this species had been taken on board.

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#### CORRESPONDENCE.

L. Q., Pennsylvania, asks for information regarding the preparation of snail's tongues for microscopical objects. They are generally mounted in Canada balsam, using a thin piece of glass as a cover to the preparation.

To dissect the membrane from the mouth, one must use needles for the very small snails, and fine knives for the larger species. One can cut with certainty on such snails as *Helix albolabris*, by slitting the œsophagus open from above, care being taken not to cut the jaw, which can be plainly seen with the naked eye. The incision is made between the larger tentacles. The membrane bearing the minute teeth is quite tough, and can be picked away with needles. For the minute snails the readiest way is to pick the head in small pieces on a glass slide. With the microscope, the portion containing the tongue can be readily detected by the tessellated appearance of that organ. All other fragments are then wiped from the slide, and the membrane can be then separated by gently pulling apart the fragment into numerous pieces, and again examining with the glass, removing as before all the bits of muscular fibre not connected with the tongue. With considerable care and patience the tongue may be removed entire. During this work the preparation must be well moistened; a drop of water is sufficient.—E. S. M.

E. L., Illinois.—The following works have been published on North American Lichens:—"A Synopsis of the Lichens of New England, the other North American States, and British America." By Edward Tuckerman, A. M., Cambridge, 1848. 1 vol. 8vo, 93 pp. "An Enumeration of North American Lichens, with a Preliminary View of the Structure and General History of these Plants, and of the Friesian System," etc. By Edward Tuckerman, A. M. Cambridge, 1845. 8vo, pp. 59.

W. H. S., Minnesota.—You will find Shirley Hibbard's Book of the Aquarium, published in London, 1856, the cheapest and best manual